

APPENDIX B. CONTINUED

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (SLBE)

Establishment: October 21, 1970.

Designations: National Lakeshore; Class II airshed. Wilderness designation has been recommended for 30,903 acres. Congressional legislation in 1982 requires that these areas be administered to “maintain presently existing wilderness character and potential... ..until Congress determines otherwise”.

Purpose and significance statements important to ecological monitoring:

- To preserve and protect natural features, including forests, beaches, dune formations, and ancient glacial phenomena.
- To identify, inventory, study, monitor, restore, and protect the natural flora, fauna, geological features, and the natural systems endemic to the area.

General description: Sleeping Bear Dunes protects 71,189 acres of land and water along the northeastern shore of Lake Michigan. The lakeshore includes two large islands in Lake Michigan: North and South Manitou. There are 65 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, 26 inland lakes, and four streams. The interior forested areas are dominated by American beech and several species of maple.

Visitation and human uses: In 2002, the lakeshore experienced 1.2 million visitor use days. The Manitou Islands are reached by ferries during the summer months; there is no visitor access to offshore areas from November through April. The lakeshore is open to hunting and fishing, which is managed cooperatively with the state of Michigan. Trapping is not allowed. Typical visitor activities include summer and winter camping, canoeing, kayaking, swimming, boating, sight seeing, motor travel, dune climbing, bicycling, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, and ice fishing.

Critical resources: The federal and state- endangered piping plover nests along beaches. There are several bald eagle nests in the park, including both islands on Lake Michigan. There are rare orchids and ferns, a grove of giant-sized white cedar, and several federally listed plant species such as Pitcher’s thistle (threatened) and the Michigan monkey flower (endangered). Old farm fields have created grasslands now important to several grassland-nesting birds, which are declining across North America.

Primary threats: Airborne pollutants, surface waters contaminated with toxic waste, exotic plants and animals, diseases spread from domestic animals, human development along the boundaries, impacts from former land use (i.e., dumps, gravel pits, farms), visitor use impacts.

Important management documents: The General Management Plan was completed in 1979 and a new GMP was being developed when planning was stopped by the Department of Interior in October, 2002. The following resource plans are in place or being developed: Water Resources Management Plan (2002), Fire Management Plan (under development), Cultural Resource Plan (1998), Land Protection Plan (1999 draft), and Natural Resource Management Plan is in place.

For important park monitoring reports see Supplemental Document #3

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Map of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore and surrounding area.